**DEMONS AND DEMON POSSESSION**

Demons are real; they do, indeed, exist. Any effort to deny the eyewitness testimony of Jesus, His apostles, and the multitudes who witnessed demonic activity is wrongheaded. Consider a just few verses on the reality of demons and demonic activity: Matthew 12:22-29; Mark 1:23-28; 5:1-15; Acts 19:13-17. But why were demons allowed such free reign in Bible times? The evidence suggests that demons were allowed free reign so that God might manifest Himself through His power over them. When Jesus cast out demons, He indicated that it was a clear demonstration that "the kingdom (rule) of God has come upon you" (Mt.12:28; cf. Mk.16:17-20).

The origin of demons a matter of conjecture. In my view, the most plausible explanation is that demons are "fallen angels." Perhaps a better term would be "angels that sinned." To support this idea, consider these five facts: **1)** Satan is the "ruler" of the demon kingdom (Mt.12:24-25). **2)** Both demons and angels are spirit-beings (Mk.5:12-13; Hb.1:13-14). **3)** There were "angels who sinned" (2Pt.2:4; Jude 6). **4)** "He who sins is of the Devil" (1Jn.3:8). **5)** Satan has "his angels" (Mt.25:41; Rv.12:7-10). Hence, it is logical to infer that these "angels who sinned" are the demons. Admittedly, this view regarding the origin of demons is not conclusive; but it is worthy of consideration.

The most important part of this study is to stress that demons are no longer able to possess people as in the days of Christ and the apostles. We can reach this conclusion from several lines of reasoning.

**First, the miraculous abilities have ceased (1Cor.13:8-12).** This includes the ability to "cast out demons" (Mk.16:17-20). Hence, if demons could still possess us, we would have no means of ridding ourselves of them (cp. Ac.19:13-17). As a result, we would be hopelessly at the mercy of Satan. However, the Bible does not picture us as helpless victims of Satan, but as overcomers through Jesus (Rm.8:37-39; 1Cor.10:13; 1Pt.5:8-9). "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1Jn.4:4).

**Second, the Bible teaches that Jesus has bound the "strong man" (Satan).** Jesus said that He "cast out demons by the Spirit of God." Then, He compared this to someone binding a "strong man," so that He might "spoil his house" (Mt.12:22-29). Consider also in this light 1 John 3:8, Luke 10:17-18, and Revelation 12:7-10.

**Third, the demons themselves knew that there was a time coming when they would be rendered powerless and sent to "the abyss" (Lk.8:31).** They asked Jesus, "Have You come here to torment us *before the time?"* (Mt.8:28-29). I would like to suggest that *"the time"* spoken of in Matthew 8:29 coincides with *"that day"* of Zechariah 13:1-2. In this prophecy, we see several events that were to occur *"in that day."*

***"In that day a fountain shall be opened... for sin."*** Surely anyone can see the reference to the (then) future sacrifice of Christ and its benefits. This part of the prophecy is fulfilled (1Cor.15:1-4; Ac.2:38-41; Rm.6:3-4). ***"And it shall be in that day, says the Lord of Hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land."*** Who worships those idols of old? Who serves Baal, Molech, Dagon, or even Jupiter and Diana (cf. Ac.19:26-27)? This part of the prophecy is fulfilled, also. ***"I will also cause the prophets… to depart from the land."*** This was fulfilled in the completed Scriptures (Jn.16:13; 1Cor.13:8-12; Jude 3). Interestingly enough, coinciding with these events, God caused ***"the unclean spirit to depart from the land"* (Zech.13:1-2).**

All of these events took place in the same time period (i.e., *"in that day”*). Hence, if we can see that salvation is now available, the idols of old have ceased to be worshipped, and that the prophets have ceased to arise, then we can see that demons are no longer active. Another interesting verse which bears some connection with this idea is found in Revelation 12:7-10. Notice especially the time reference in verse 10, and compare this with Luke 10:17-18.

Yes, demons are real beings. They are probably "fallen angels." However, they cannot possess men today. But let us never forget that Satan is still very active through persuasion (Job.1:7; 1Pt.5:8-9; Jm.1:13-15). He is constantly tempting us to turn our hearts from God. This work of Satan is far worse than any demonic possession, for it can lead one into eternal ruin in the flames of Hell (Mt.25:41-46). But the good news is that you can "resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Jm.4:7). You can turn to Christ in obedient faith and be saved from your sins. Then, you can look forward to that home in Heaven which awaits the faithful (Ga.3:26-27; 1Pt.1:3-5). Won't you accept the invitation of Christ and be saved?

--Lanny Smith